



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

The Surgeon General of the
Public Health Service
Rockville MD 20857

Editor
Time Magazine
Time and Life Building
Rockefeller Center
New York, New York 10020

Dear Sir:

It was with a great deal of enthusiasm and interest that I read your article "Sex and Schools" in the education section of the November 24, 1986 edition of Time Magazine. Provocative articles written by responsible journalists are the life blood of informed debate. The issues surrounding the AIDS epidemic need informed debate to develop the policies and attitudes necessary to save the lives of our children, while protecting our moral and ethical principles.

I do not believe that sex education can be taught without values. In a perfect society values taught in the home are reinforced by church, school, and community. In a society with differing values we must strive at the local level to agree on that level of information vital to our health and that of our children. We should, above all, emphasize that abstinence from sexual activities, alcohol, and intravenous drugs is the safest course of action for our children. By providing a "value laden" sex education for our children we can protect them from the consequences of experimentation without promoting promiscuity, and at the same time reinforce moral opposition to premarital sex.

Sex education should take place in the home and at school at the earliest possible time. Each child is unique and requires tailored approaches by the family and by the local school board. The responsibility is equally heavy for both family and religious groups -- instill your values into your children and within that framework protect their health and their lives. A large part of that responsibility is aggressive interaction through our democratic institutions to ensure that appropriate values are included in our children's school based education. I would hope that all could agree that abstinence from sexual activities and from the use of drugs and alcohol for our youngsters are societal values we can agree on.

Sincerely yours,

C. Everett Koop, M.D.
Surgeon General